United Nations A/69/PV.96

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

96th plenary meeting
Friday, 19 June 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 118 *(continued)*

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the First Committee (A/69/946)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the First Committee which is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the First Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members, that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I further remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the First Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the First Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

The Assembly has before it a draft decision recommended by the First Committee in paragraph 5 of its report. We will now take action on the draft decision. The First Committee recommended that the Assembly adopt the draft decision entitled "Provisional programme of work and timetable of the First Committee for 2015". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 69/520 B).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 160

Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/69/934)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee which is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

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The President: Statements shall therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members, that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I further remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The First Committee recommended that the Assembly adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 69/289).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 160.

Agenda item 62 *(continued)*

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support (A/69/L.64/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 62 and its sub-items (a) and (b) and agenda item 12 at its 26th and 27th plenary meetings, on 26 October 2014.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.64/Rev.1.

Mr. Muenda (South Africa): I have the honour, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.64/Rev.1, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support". The draft resolution continues to be an important text that advances recent developments and initiatives pertaining to Africa's development and growth. The draft resolution highlights the challenges that the continent continues to contend with, including, among others, the fight against poverty, high youth unemployment and continually rising inequality.

Allow me to highlight the following paragraphs, which are key in the draft resolution.

The draft resolution notes the importance of foreign direct investment as a major source of financing for development and its critical role in achieving development objectives and inclusive economic growth, including through the promotion of job creation and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and that it contributes to the active participation of African economies in the global economy and facilitates regional economic cooperation and integration. The draft resolution further emphasizes that economic development, including inclusive industrial development and policies that seek to enhance productive capacities in Africa, can generate employment and income for the poor and therefore be an engine for poverty eradication, as well as achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The draft resolution welcomes the adoption of the African Union Agenda 2063 as a comprehensive, overarching strategy for socioeconomic transformation for the next decades. In that regard, the Group of 77 and China is encouraged by the importance that Member States attach in the draft resolution to supporting Agenda 2063. Furthermore, the draft resolution recognizes the important role that African regional economic communities can play in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year action plan, in close cooperation with the African Union. In that regard, it encourages African countries

and the international community to give regional economic communities the necessary support to strengthen capacity.

The draft resolution also recognizes the efforts of African countries to enhance food security and nutrition on the continent, including through implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. In addition, the draft resolution welcomes the first biennial report of the Secretary-General (A/69/163) on the review of the implementation of the commitments made to Africa's development, recognizing the importance of the second biennial report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

Lastly, the draft resolution highlights the socioeconomic impacts of the Ebola outbreak on the most affected countries in West Africa; recognizes all national, regional and international efforts, including those of the United Nations, to stem the spread of the outbreak; and calls for effective measures to overcome its profound negative effects.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the facilitator of the resolution for bringing the informals to a conclusion. I further express my appreciation to the coordinators for their commitment and to the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for its assistance.

I commend the draft resolution A/69/L.64/Rev.1 to the General Assembly for adoption by consensus.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.64/Rev.1, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/69/L.64/Rev.1: Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Senegal, Slovenia and Turkey.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.64/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/69/L.64/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 69/290).

The President: May I take that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 62?

It was so decided.

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Draft resolution (A/69/L.63/Rev. 1)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly considered in a joint debate agenda item 62 and its sub-items (a) and (b), as well as agenda item 12, during the 26th and 27th plenary meetings, on 26 October 2014.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.63/Rev.1.

Mr. Muenda (South Africa): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.63/Rev.1, entitled "Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". The Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation to all the delegations for their constructive contributions, which have led to the finalization of the text before the Assembly. This is a continued affirmation of the support of the United Nations membership for the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The text continues to be an important platform in stressing Africa's responsibility for peace and security on the continent, and the need for Africa to strengthen its capacity to address the root causes of conflict and resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner.

Allow me to highlight some paragraphs which are key in the draft resolution.

The draft resolution notes the positive trends and advances in obtaining durable peace in Africa and the conditions required for sustainable development, as well as the urgent need to continue developing African human and institutional capacity, particularly in countries emerging from conflict. Furthermore, the draft resolution embraces the importance of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 as a strategic vision and an action plan for ensuring a positive socioeconomic transformation in Africa within the next 50 years, and recognizes that peace and security are critical enablers for sustainable development. It is important to highlight

that the draft resolution also welcomes the progress made by African countries, the AU and subregional organizations in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development.

Also, besides traditional peace and security in Africa, the draft resolution addresses emerging challenges, particularly terrorism, and encourages the United Nations system to support African regional and subregional organizations in the implementation of counter-terrorism action plans. By the same token, the draft resolution demonstrates the commitment of Member States to supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa and to end all wars in Africa by 2020, including by considering defining a concrete five-year action plan to support the attainment of this goal.

In the light of the importance of enhancing the capacity of the African Union to meet the challenges of peace, security and development, the draft resolution underscores the importance of the full implementation of a 10-year capacity-building programme for the AU. The draft resolution welcomes the ongoing efforts, through the Regional Coordination Mechanism, to formulate a successor programme, given that the 10-year capacity-building programme will expire in 2016.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to thank the facilitator of the draft resolution for bringing the informals to a speedy conclusion. I also express my appreciation to the two coordinators for their commitment and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for its assistance throughout the negotiation process. I commend draft resolution A/69/L.63/Rev.1 to the General Assembly for its adoption by consensus.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.63/Rev.1, entitled "Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of a durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of A/69/L.63/Rev.1: Australia, Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Sweden and Turkey.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.63/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/69/L.63/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 69/291).

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Rwanda to make a statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Group of African States on the important occasion of the adoption of resolution 69/291, on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The resolution is timely and relevant. Although the United Nations was established in response to threats to peace and security as a collective effort to save future generations from the scourge of war, today we still witness conflicts of varying lengths with varying death tolls. It is also timely and relevant because many countries in Africa have consistently become theatres of conflict since the United Nations was established 70 years ago. Nearly a third of sub-Saharan countries were involved in active civil wars during the mid-1990s. While the strength of those wars may have decreased, violence and deadly conflicts still exist in Africa, which currently account for two thirds of the Security Council's agenda.

Why must we continue to talk about conflicts and not peace when we should be celebrating the milestones of the seventieth anniversary of the Organization? We agree that existing normative theories on the causes of conflicts have been covered in millions of pages of literature, including those within the United Nations, but in actual conflict there remains little consensus or will to implement even the most effective policies to avert them. For example, in Africa, despite the various mechanisms in place, both preventive and reactive, conflict has been commonplace during the past half-century. Today, entrenched conflicts are not just extremely common; they persist and lead to relapses.

Although in the 1960s, there was some degree of justification at a time when Africa was trying to redefine itself in the wake of decolonization, current conflict tactics have called into question our collective efforts towards a prosperous and conflict-free Africa.

We believe that most of those efforts had been directed towards proximate and immediate causes and that little had been done to address the real root causes.

While the United Nations now shifts its attention towards identifying the underlying causes of conflict, the African Group believes that it is important to invest in the development of strong national institutions, including legislative and judicial bodies, that can establish the foundations of good governance, based on the rule of law, democratic principles and values, and accountability. That investment will ensure ownership of the processes, strengthen existing mechanisms and lead to the particular society's resilience to conflicts.

The African Group advises that cooperation be streamlined and long-term structural measures implemented. Increased cooperation within the African Union and its regional economic communities will aid both the Union and the African Group in their conflict-prevention efforts and in their ability to recognize and share signs of impending or potential conflict. In that light, support for the implementation of the African Union Agenda 2063, the continent's strategic vision and an action plan for ensuring the positive economic transformation in Africa within the next 50 years, is of the utmost importance. If we genuinely wish to make Africa a conflict-free continent, pursuant to the African Union Agenda 2063, actions taken parallel to long-term goals to silence guns and end all wars by 2020 are a prerequisite to achieving a conflict-free continent. In his report (A/69/162), the Secretary-General recognizes that more needs to be done to support that goal, and the African Union welcomes his recommendation that the General Assembly define a five-year concrete actionable plan to that purpose.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the successful promotion of durable peace in Africa would require our redoubled efforts in strengthening structures and policies to create an environment conducive to the promotion of inclusive economic development. Indeed, as recognized in the newly adopted resolution 69/291, development, peace, security and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We upon all United Nations entities directly working in those areas in collaboration and cooperation with national Governments to continue developing African human and institutional capacities, particularly in countries emerging from conflict in order to prevent their relapse into conflict. In that regard, it is our hope that this year will mark a turning point with the adoption of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and the ongoing review of peace operations and peacebuilding architecture, which we hope will provide concrete recommendations to promote sustainable peace and development in Africa.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 62 and agenda item 62 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 74 (*continued*)

Oceans and the law of the sea

(a) Oceans and the law of the sea

Draft resolution (A/69/L.65)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/69/L.65 (A/69/922)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 74 and its sub-items (a) and (b) and adopted resolution 69/109 at its 67th plenary meeting, on 9 December 2014. Members will also recall that under sub-item (a) of agenda item 74, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/245 at its 76th plenary meeting, on 29 December 2014. Members will further recall that at its 92nd plenary meeting, on 3 June 2015, the representative of Trinidad and Tobago introduced resolution A/69/L.65 on behalf of its sponsors.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.65, entitled "Development of an international legally-binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction".

In that connection, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the statement regarding programme budget implications, contained in document A/69/922. The Fifth Committee will examine during the main part of the seventieth session of the Assembly the revised estimates arising from the draft resolution and report to the Advisory Committee on the administrative and budgetary questions thereon. Consequently, the financial provisions, as appropriate, will be considered as an additional budget appropriation to be approved by the Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/69/L.65: Algeria, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Cameroon, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, the Netherlands, Palau, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand and Tunisia.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.65?

Draft resolution A/69/L.65 was adopted (resolution 69/292).

The President: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Özaydın (Turkey): Regarding resolution 69/292, which was adopted under agenda item 74 (a), I would like to point out that Turkey supports efforts aimed at the efficient, environmentally conscious and sustainable use of maritime spaces, in accordance with international law. Accordingly, Turkey supported the resolution. That having been said, the participation of our delegation in the deliberations and negotiations envisaged in the framework of resolution 69/292, which may result in a possible legally binding instrument, cannot be construed as a change in the established position of Turkey with regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Mr. Medina Mita (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to refer to resolution 69/292, entitled "Development of an international legally-binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction", which has just been adopted by the General Assembly. We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the facilitator of the resolution, Ambassador Eden Charles of Trinidad and Tobago. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

At this time, I recall that Venezuela is not a party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. For that reason, the norms contained in that instrument, particularly those that might be considered international customary law, do not apply to us unless we recognize them in conformity with the exercise of our full sovereignty. Given the importance of the sustainable exploitation of biologically diverse resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction, we emphatically maintain and reiterate that this issue must be regulated by a specific international instrument that is distinct from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is imbued with a sense of caution with respect to safeguarding the rights of humankind as a whole.

Venezuela believes that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea cannot be the only legal framework regulating activities related to the oceans and the seas, and cannot be qualified as a universal instrument. We have also indicated that we do not reject the criteria and principles set out in such instruments, and we note that they can be approved and adapted to our needs, taking into account the principles of responsibility, cooperation, equity and sustainability.

It was for those reasons that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expressed a reservation on the matter at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development — a position that we reiterate today. We would also point out that our non-objection to the text adopted at this meeting must not be interpreted as a change in our position with regard to the Convention or its role in a future legal regime applicable to marine resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Mr. Orozco Barrera (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by emphasizing the spirit of flexibility that characterized the discussions throughout the consultations that resulted in the text of resolution 69/292, entitled "Development of an international legally-binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction", which has been adopted by consensus. Colombia reaffirms its commitment to addressing matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources

in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the protection of the oceans and the need to ensure that they are fully preserved.

In my delegation's view, the resolution is intended to address the technical and procedural aspects of the meetings of the preparatory committee for the intergovernmental conference on the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in accordance with the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group established to study the matter (A/69/780, annex, sect. I). I also recognize the tireless work of the facilitator on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Mr. Thembela Ngculu of the South African delegation, for his endless patience and hard work.

Colombia, a megadiverse country with Pacific and Atlantic coastlines, understands the importance of the process under way, in which a further step forward has been taken today. Colombia has two of the world's largest areas for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity, and we believe that development cannot be achieved at the cost of our national resources. Colombia joined the consensus adoption of the resolution on the meetings of the preparatory committee for the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in accordance with the aforementioned recommendations, on the understanding — stated many times in this and other forums — that our support does not imply that we accept the provisions of or obligations emanating from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, to which the Republic of Colombia is not a party.

In that regard, we emphasize that neither our participation in the negotiations, consultations and discussions, nor their outcome, can affect the legal status of Colombia with regard to the Convention or any related instrument, as established in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution. I respectfully request that this statement be included in the official report of the session.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote for this meeting.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Marhic (European Union): The European Union (EU) and its member States are pleased to join the consensus on the adoption of the important resolution 69/292, entitled "Development of an international legally-binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction", which establishes and provides the modalities for a preparatory committee to make substantive recommendations to the General Assembly on the elements of a draft text of an international legally binding instrument, taking into account the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group.

We have taken note of the programme budget implications statement presented by the Secretariat. We wish to stress that the estimates presented, which relate to the proposed programme budget for 2016-2017, do not prejudge the Secretary-General's submission to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee of his proposed budget for the 2016-2017 biennium, nor those bodies' consideration of those proposals in the course of the current year. These estimates should therefore not be perceived as having been endorsed by Member States today.

Furthermore, we do not regard the adoption today of a resolution, accompanied solely by a statement of estimated requirements for a future budget period, as implying that Member States have agreed not to comply with rule 153. The Secretary-General's proposed budget for 2016-2017 and subsequent revised estimates that arise will be subject to scrutiny by the ACABQ and then the Fifth Committee in the usual way.

Indeed, in that regard, we note from paragraph 10 of document A/69/922 that a revised estimate will be issued and considered in the main part of the seventieth session in accordance with the normal budged procedures. Nothing we have done today should therefore be seen as pre-empting the negotiation of the proposed programme budget for 2016-2017 or of any revised estimates for 2016-2017, which will take place in the fall of 2015.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 74?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 32 (*continued*)

Prevention of armed conflicts

Draft resolution (A/69/L.75)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/285 under this agenda item at its 92nd plenary meeting, on 3 June. I would like to inform members that the debate on this agenda item will be held at a later date, to be announced.

I welcome the imminent adoption of the draft resolution on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (A/69/L.75), which demonstrates the continuing resolve and commitment of Member States to eliminating such violence. By calling for such an international day for the elimination of sexual violence in conflict, the General Assembly is positioning itself to address concerns that require its multilateral deliberative authority for effective implementation and follow-through.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations constitute grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, but such depraved acts continue to occur and are used to terrorize and control civilian populations in conflict zones. Together, we must prioritize prevention and response efforts, empower victims, provide comprehensive assistance and shift the stigma of shame from the victims of such crimes to those who commit and condone them.

Sexual violence is not a new phenomenon. In my country, Uganda, there was an era when horrendous atrocities were committed, including the abduction of children, the killing of men and the rape of women. Such atrocities fuelled outrage among our people. We did more than merely speak out against them; the people rose against the Government that had perpetuated the atrocities. The use of rape as a weapon of war must be stopped. We should ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes and the superiors who condone their actions are held accountable, and that the victims receive justice.

The full and equal participation of women must be ensured for the establishment of enduring peace. Women must be included in efforts to resolve conflicts and in the post-conflict transition, reconstruction and peacebuilding processes, as well as in initiatives targeting the elimination of sexual violence in conflict. I commend the delegation of Argentina and the sponsors of this initiative. I also thank the numerous other countries and civil society groups, particularly women's organizations, that have championed past initiatives related to women and peace and security, and children in armed conflict.

I note with appreciation the important work under way within the United Nations system, including the initiatives of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflict. I also thank the members of the High-level Advisory Group for Global Study on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) for their preparatory efforts on the forthcoming global study on women and peace and security. Today, we are reaffirming our collective resolve to work together to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.

I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.75.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to have this opportunity to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.75, on the establishment of an International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

As you know and have said, Mr. President, Argentina is a country where fundamental freedoms and human rights are part of State policy and a lifestyle. Latin America and the Caribbean is a region where peace is synonymous with our very future. We are the South, diverse and vibrant, in which, with effort and courage, we are striving to establish a more united, just and equal world.

We are here today in the General Assembly Hall, a place where multilateral democracy is alive as in no other place, forging the bases of global agreements that embody and realize the ideals of our time to eradicate poverty and hunger, establish sustainable development in the economic, social and environmental spheres, and progress towards a more balanced and equitable international order that includes everybody with equal opportunities, conditions and treatment. That is not only a challenge that brings us together; it is a responsibility that we are called to assume together.

Nevertheless, if we are to achieve these objectives we urgently need — as Pope Francis wrote this week in his encyclical *Laudato Si* — a new ethic in international relations and a new universal solidarity — a conversation that includes us all, without discrimination or exclusion, because the challenges we face interest us all, involve us all, inspire us all and affect us all. For that reason, I believe that through this draft resolution today we are entrenching a culture of peace and striving to find specific solutions for thousands and thousands of humans beings, mostly women, girls and boys who are the victims of hatred and intolerance, of cruelty and violence in multiple forms — in this case, sexual violence used in conflicts as a weapon of war to humiliate, dominate, subjugate and degrade our human dignity.

This initiative derives not from individual effort or an individual country, but from the joint work that we have been undertaking for some time now with our Organization and the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, and on Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, with the aim of preventing and eradicating sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and ensuring that the perpetrators are brought to justice and the victims protected. The initiative therefore seeks to raise the international community's awareness of the need to end sexual violence in conflict, to provide sufficient multidimensional assistance to the victims of such crimes, and to resolutely combat impunity for the perpetrators of such violations through effective accountability under the relevant judicial systems.

In that context, we seek to pursue joint efforts to do away with attitudes and behaviour that hinder the path towards a solution, which range from denial of the problem to indifference and comfortable resignation to ineffective interventions that seek to deal only with the symptoms and not to address the more underlying causes that generate and perpetuate sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. This war crime, this crime against humanity, this form of extreme violence is exercised in particular — and I repeat this — against women, boys and girls, the poor, ethnic and religious minorities and other vulnerable groups.

To that end, Argentina has drafted the draft resolution before us today, which was endorsed by Member States following four rounds of informal consultations. We express our thanks for and appreciation of the great willingness, unequivocal commitment and constructive spirit demonstrated by delegations that participated in the negotiation process. The draft resolution being introduced to the Assembly today follows the guidelines and recent precedents, as well as the guidelines of the Economic and Social Council for the proclamation of international days.

I shall digress from my prepared speech for a moment. While we have too many international days on our calendar, this is a moment to reconsider but not overlook a clear violation of human dignity. I believe that these international days have a meaning because they express the commitment that led to the adoption the Charter of the United Nations — a commitment to peace, human rights, development, dignity and freedom for all men and women.

On the basis of that consensus, we have come up with language previously agreed in the General Assembly or in the Security Council. We respect the agreements that have been reached because they demonstrate, in the framework of the General Assembly and the Security Council, that it is not a path that we are starting upon today. It is a path that we have been moving along together. We have not included divisive elements or references to specific cases. This is not a political game, but an ethical rallying cry for humankind. We have had enough of sexual violence in conflicts.

We have sought to make the draft resolution universal in nature. It is based on two key documents on the subject of sexual violence in conflict: Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) and General Assembly resolution 69/147, of 18 December 2014.

We have chosen 19 June to celebrate the new International Day will because it reflects the date of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). I reiterate that we are trying to associate the International Day not with any specific conflict situation, but with a tragedy that is suffered by humankind as a whole. We want the draft resolution to be an expression of a strategic institutional vision because the various bodies of the United Nations must not compete among themselves. They must neither cancel one another out nor dominate one another. It is the General Assembly that is making this appeal, in support of the achievements of the Security Council. It is seeking not to replace but to complement and cooperate with the Council. Therefore if the Security Council, in the face of this tragic reality, wishes to work upon and fine-tune its mechanisms and

decisions, we also understand that here in the General Assembly we do not have the right to be indifferent. We have the duty to act.

We greatly value the massive support that we have received from Member States for the draft resolution, which can be inferred from the large number of States that have sponsored this initiative. We have well over 100 sponsors. We know that preventing and eradicating sexual violence in armed conflicts, punishing the perpetrators and providing protection to the victims is not and will not be easy nor will it be immediate, but we also know that we have no excuses for not trying.

We must dare to put an end to this violence once and for all. We must commit ourselves to fully defending the integrity of human lives and to working sincerely and tirelessly to prevent, combat and eradicate this scourge to achieve genuine and lasting peace for the victims — the women, boys, girls, poor people, ethnic minorities, religious minorities and other vulnerable groups. Some people believe that the lives of these people are worth nothing, but we are here to tell them that their lives are important.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.75, entitled "International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed on the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/69/L.75: Afghanistan, Andorra, Belarus, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, China, Cuba, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Suriname, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Vanuatu.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.75?

Draft resolution A/69/L.75 was adopted (resolution 69/293).

The President: I now call on those delegations wishing to make statements following the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): First of all, the Republic of Korea welcomes the establishment of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. I would like to thank Argentina and the Offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict for leading us in the establishment of this important day for the elimination of sexual violence in conflict.

As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action along with the fifteenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, we have taken another meaningful step forward by establishing such an important day for the protection of the rights of women and girls. It is well known that sexual violence has a long history of being committed during war, not only in the form of rape, but also in other forms of comparable gravity, such as sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization.

In all its forms, sexual violence constitutes a violation of the human rights of women and girls, posing a further threat to the peace and security of the local, regional and international communities to which their victims belong. Moreover, sexual violence ultimately perpetuates and exacerbates the vicious cycle of conflicts and human rights violations. The international community has exerted great effort in an attempt to address that heinous crime. Most recently, the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, held in London a year ago, tackled the issue in a more strategic and comprehensive way. The June 2014 Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on reparations for conflict-related sexual violence also provides detailed guiding principles on how to provide tranformative reparations for victims of conflict-related sexual violence. Needless to say, the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has made a significant impact on dealing with this serious issue.

In spite of such efforts, however, sexual violence in conflicts persists, as evident in the current cases surrounding the international community. Therefore, the international community must further strengthen and redouble its ongoing efforts to end such heinous crimes. In particular, we must end a culture of impunity by holding the perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict accountable. Providing relevant education for the next generation is indispensable for effectively preventing this sort of tragedy from recurring in the future.

In the light of all the work that remains to be done, the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict cannot simply be regarded or dismissed as one of the more than 120 already existing international days. Rather, the international day must be observed annually in a solemn, meaningful and active way. That is precisely why the Republic of Korea proposed that the International Day be observed as a historically significant and highly relevant date, 19 June. On that day seven years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1820 (2008), one of the seven Council resolutions on women and peace and security, which underscores that sexual violence in conflict constitutes a war crime. Moreover, it demands that parties to armed conflict immediately take appropriate measures to protect civilians from sexual violence.

While we agree that it is important that all Council resolutions on women and peace and security, including resolution 1820 (2008), be promptly and effectively put into practice, we also recognize that the elimination of sexual violence in conflict depends on much more than the implementation of the relevant resolutions. It cannot be achieved without the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including Member States, United Nations agencies, civil society and parties to conflict worldwide. I believe that the newly established International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict can provide valuable opportunities for the engagement of all such stakeholders.

As resolution 60/293 emphasizes, the day should serve to inspire all Member States, all organizations and bodies in the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations, and civil society to reaffirm and ensure their commitment to putting an end to sexual violence in conflict, promoting public awareness about the issue and honouring the victims and survivors of sexual violence around the world. If leveraged properly and observed actively, the International Day has the potential to help develop and advance critical international norms on ensuring accountability and on providing assistance and reparations for victims of sexual violence in conflict.

It is our sincere hope that the annual observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict will soon mark a milestone in our noble endeavours to eliminate sexual violence in conflict once and for all, and to ensure dignity and justice for all in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): First of all, I would like to congratulate the Assembly on its adoption of resolution 69/293, on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. Let me also commend and thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Mrs. María Cristina Perceval, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations, for spearheading today's resolution.

It is my great pleasure to be here. I fully concur with the Permanent Representative of Argentina, who stressed that today's meeting is an occasion to adopt the International Day with a view to eliminating sexual violence in conflict from the world and to build up the preparatory process of the resolution. I would like to commend the efforts of everyone who engaged in the preparation for the adoption of the International Day, particularly Argentina, which has shown great leadership and chairmanship in the preparatory process. Let me stress that Japan, as a strong supporter of the International Day, continues to make efforts to eliminate conflict-related sexual violence.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank and congratulate Argentina for introducing the important resolution 69/293 to the General Assembly. Thanks to this initiative, each year on this date the international community will remember the immense price that civilians, particularly women and children, pay in armed conflict by falling victim to sexual violence. We renew our commitment to combating that crime.

I take this opportunity to thank once again the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict, Ms. Bangura, for her exceptional work and commitment, and to recall the importance of having the entire United Nations system improve and enhance its coordination with her Office in order to maintain consistency in fight against this form of violence. The work of the Special Representative is key to maintaining the focus on a form of violence

that, in many cases, is used as a weapon of terror and deployed systematically and with a high degree of sophistication by parties to conflict.

Spain is fully committed to combating this crime. In recent years, we have observed with satisfaction how the international community has come to grasp the overarching importance of this combat in the debates that we have held on international peace and security. Nevertheless, we are still far from including sexual violence among the main threats to peace and security. That continues to be a major challenge, as we have said in many of our statements to this and other forums of the Organization. We believe that the serious nature of this crime calls for a speedy and systematic response with an immediate, practical impact that goes beyond the mere condemnation of the use of sexual violence against civilians as a weapon of war and terror. We believe that there are four particularly important elements in combating this crime.

First is the key importance of civil society as the engine and catalyst of the process of achieving national ownership in combating this serious violation of human rights, and the need for women's organizations to play an increasingly proactive role in peace processes.

Secondly, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes should pay particular attention to the circumstances and specific needs of the victims of sexual violence in the course of reintegration and reinsertion so as to avoid the rejection, stigmatization and exclusion of victims, which contribute greatly to the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators, as well as to the perpetuation of this crime. The fight against this crime in post-conflict situations is vital.

Thirdly, we need to put an end to impunity for these crimes. There are serious shortcomings in the way justice systems deal with conflict-related sexual violence, in some cases because of the lack of targeted training, and in others because of the patriarchal or discriminatory mindset that perpetuates this crime. We stress the need to guarantee that sexual violence is included in all transitional and post-conflict justice processes. The International Criminal Court must also be allowed to play the role that it deserves.

Fourthly and finally, we should ensure the proper training and commitment of the political leadership, high-ranking officers of national armies and security forces, and the contingents of peacekeeping operations. The United Nations must set an example in its zero-tolerance policy.

I wish to close by recalling that the high-level review of Security Council 1325 (2000) to take place in October will give us a historical opportunity to address this problem, especially in giving victims and survivors the attention they deserve, not only in terms of reparations, but also in terms of their reintegration and participation.

The President: I give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Reverend Monsignor Grech (Holy See): My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/293, entitled "International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict". We wish to thank the Permanent Mission of Argentina, the main sponsor of the resolution, for its hard work, and for having created an environment of cooperation throughout the entire process.

My delegation condemns in the strongest possible terms all forms of violence against civilians, while reiterating Pope Francis' numerous calls to put an end to the use of violence, especially against children, women and girls in situations of armed conflict, post-conflict and conflict-related situations. They constitute grave violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Throughout the negotiation process my delegation worked closely with the facilitator and with other delegations to produce a text that my delegation could fully support. However, the final resolution contains language that remains undefined and unclear for a number of delegations, including my own, as well as language and references to resolutions on which my delegation has strong reservations. With this in mind, my delegation would like to put on record its reservations on paragraphs 1, 2 and 5.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 32.

The meeting rose at 11.30 p.m.